

MAR 05 1979

Docket No. 50-331

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Mr. Gary Wallin
 Citizens United for Responsible Energy
 1810 Higley Avenue, S. E.
 Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403

Dear Mr. Wallin:

On December 29, 1978, you requested on behalf of Citizens United for Responsible Energy (CURE) that the Director of Nuclear Reactor Regulation institute a proceeding pursuant to 10 CFR 2.202 to suspend the License No. DPR-49 issued to Iowa Electric Light and Power Company to operate the Duane Arnold Energy Center, pending modification of the license to include an augmented inservice inspection program of the safe-end assemblies (transition pieces). Your request has been treated as a request pursuant to 10 CFR 2.206 to institute a proceeding to modify a license under 10 CFR 2.202. As Mr. Stello discussed with you on Friday, March 2, 1979, your request for an augmented inservice inspection program is consistent with the requirements set by the staff.

The Commission's regulations in 10 CFR 50.55a require facilities under construction or in operation to meet the standards for inservice inspection set forth in the ASME Code. However, the Commission recognizes that there may be instances which inspection requirements of the ASME or other generally recognized Codes may not be completely adequate for the different and, in many cases, unique designs of the existing facilities. The Commission may impose pursuant to 10 CFR 50.55a(g)(6) augmented inspection requirements on plants where problem areas are suspect or have been exhibited through operational experience. For the Duane Arnold facility the recirculation line-to-nozzle safe-end pieces have been replaced by a modified design and the welds subjected to the examination requirements and acceptance criteria of the ASME Code, with UT examinations performed at a sensitivity increased beyond the Code requirements. Nevertheless, we have concluded that additional monitoring is needed to assure that unrecognized factors do not exist that could cause future cracking of the pressure boundary welds in the new safe-end assembly. The Commission believes that an augmented inservice inspection of the certain welds is required. The attached safety evaluation discusses this in detail. Accordingly, the attached amended technical specifications have been issued to require such a program.

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Mr. Gary Wallin

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The proposed Inservice Inspection Program for the Duane Arnold Nuclear Generating Plant, dated March 1, 1978 is a program updated to the requirements of the 1974 edition through the Summer 1975 Addenda of the ASME Section XI Code as required by 10 CFR 50.55a. This program was reviewed by the staff, who had questions concerning Relief Request No. 1. Subsequently, the licensee withdrew the Relief Request. The licensee's revised submittal dated October 13, 1978, reflects compliance with the Code requirements for examination of Category B-J and B-F welds. The revised submittal has been reviewed by the staff and the technical specifications will be amended in the near future to reflect the updated inservice inspection requirements. In the interim the licensee has agreed to meet the updated program described above. We expect to complete this within three weeks and will send you a copy of our action.

Since the staff has taken action to augment inservice inspection for the safe-end welds and certain other welds and is completing action on a general updating of inservice inspection requirements, we conclude there is no need to suspend or otherwise modify the license.

Copies of the amended Technical Specifications, accompanying safety evaluation, and the licensee's submittal of February 22, 1979, are enclosed for your information.

We appreciate your concern for the safe conduct of licensed activities.

Sincerely,

HS

Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosures:
As Stated



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